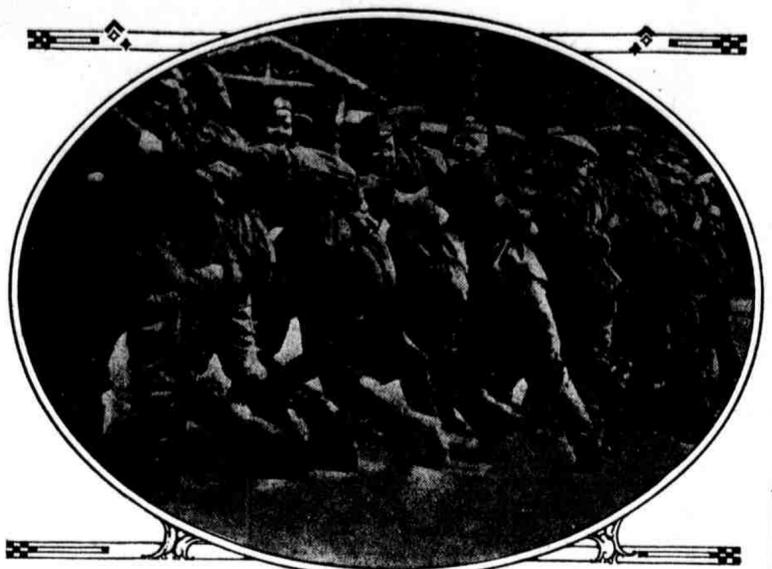


# MARIA BOTCHKAREVA GOES OVER THE TOP WITH HER HANDFUL OF HEROIC GIRLS

Accompanied by a Number of Officers and Men Disgusted With Dilatory Tactics, They Advance and Shame Army Into Following

Soldiers Hold Debate on Whether to Obey Orders and Advance at a Time When Disaster Threatens the Entire Front



Women soldiers at play—wrestling

(Copyright, 1919, by Frederick A. Stokes Co.) (This story, told by Maria Botchkareva and translated and transcribed by Isaac Levine, is published by The Evening Public Ledger under the title of "Maria.")

**THIS STARTS THE STORY**  
In the summer of 1917 Maria Botchkareva formed the Battalion of Death, a woman fighting unit in the Russian army, and a peasant girl thus stepped into the international hall of fame. In earlier assignments she told of the hardships of her childhood, the brutalities of her married life and the realization of her desire to become a soldier. She told of battles fought and won and of the demoralization of the army after the overthrow of the Czar. It was in the latter part of the war that she formed the battalion. She goes to the front with her women soldiers to find conditions even worse than when she left.

The sun crept out in the east, only to cast its rays on the extraordinary spectacle of an entire corps debating their commander's order to advance. It was four. The debate still raged. The sun rose higher. The morning mist had almost vanished. The artillery fire was slackening. The debate continued. It was five. The Germans were wondering what in the world these Russians were going to do with their offensive. All the spirit accumulated in the battalion during the night was waning, giving way to the physical strain under which we labored. And the soldiers were still discussing the advisability of attacking!

Every second was precious. "If they would only decide in the affirmative, even now it might not be too late to strike," I thought. But minutes rolled into hours, and there was no sign of a decision. It struck six, and then seven. The day was surely over. Perhaps all was lost. One's blood boiled with indignation at the absurdity, the futility of the procedure. The weak-kneed hypocrites! They feigned interest in the prudent ordering of a defensive on general principles, as if they hadn't talked for weeks about it to their hearts' content. They were plain cowards, concealing their fear in bushels of idle talk.

Orders were given to the artillery to continue the bombardment. All day the cannon boomed while the men debated. The shams, the humbug of it! These very men had given their words of honor to attack! Now the fear for the safety of their hides had overwhelmed their minds and souls. The hour of noon still found them in the midst of the debate. There were meetings and speeches in the immediate rear. Nothing more, more empty of meaning could be imagined than the arguments of the men. They were repeating in halting tones those vague phrases that had been proved false again and again, to the complete satisfaction of their own minds. And yet they lingered, drawn by their faint souls toward doubt and vacillation.

The day declined. The men had arrived at no final resolution. Then, about seventy-five officers, led by Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, came to me to ask permission to enter the ranks of the battalion for a joint advance. They were followed by several of the most intelligent and gallant soldiers in the regiment. Altogether, the battalion's ranks had swollen to about 1000. I offered them command, but lieutenant Colonel Ivanov as to a superior, but he declined.

Every officer was provided with a rifle. The line was so arranged that the men and women alternated, a girl being flanked by two men. The officers, now numbering about 100, were stationed at equal distances throughout the line.

We decided to advance in order to shame the men, having arrived at the conclusion that they would not let us perish in No Man's Land. We all felt the gravity of the decision. We had nothing to guide us in the belief that the boys would not abandon us to our fate, except a feeling that such a monstrous thing could not happen. Besides, something had to be done. An offensive had to be launched soon. The front was rapidly deteriorating to a state of impotence.

Colonel Ivanov communicated to the commander by telephone the decision of the battalion. It was a desperate gamble, and every one of us realized the grimness of the moment. The men on our flanks were joking and deriding us.

"Ha, ha! Women and officers will fight!" they yelled.  
"They are faking. Who ever saw officers go over the top like soldiers, with rifles in hand?"  
"Just watch those women run!" Joked a fellow to the merriment of a chorus of voices.  
We gritted our teeth in fury but did not reply. Our hope was still in these men. We stuck to the belief that they would follow us and, therefore, avoided slandering them.  
At last the signal was given. We crossed ourselves and, hugging our rifles, leaped out of the trenches, every one of our lives dedicated to "the country and freedom." We moved forward against a withering fire of machine guns and artillery, my brave girls, encouraged by the presence of men on either side, marching steadily against the hail of bullets.  
Every particle of time carried death with it. There was but one thought in every mind: "Will they follow?" Each fleeting instant seemed like an age that lurid morning. Already several of us were struck down, and yet no one came after us. We turned our heads every now and then, piercing the darkness in vain for support. Many heads were sticking out from the trenches in our rear. The laggards were wondering if we were in earnest. It was all a ruse to them. How could a bare thousand of women and officers attack after a two days' bombardment on a front of several versts? It seemed incredible, impossible.

boys in the back, their hearts moved.

Through the din and crash of the bombardment we suddenly caught the sound of a great commotion in the rear. Was it a feeling of shame that stirred them from their lethargy? Or was it the sight of this handful of intrepid souls that aroused their spirit? Anyhow, they were awake at last. Rounding forward with shouts, numberless bodies climbed over the top, and in a few moments the front to the right and left of us became a swaying mass of soldiers. First our regiment poured out and then, on both sides, the contagion spread and unit after unit joined in the advance, so that almost the entire corps was on the move.

We swept forward and overwhelmed the first German line, and then the second. Our regiment alone captured 2000 prisoners. But there was poison awaiting us in that second line of trenches. Vodka and beer were in abundance. Half of our force got drunk right there, throwing themselves ravenously on the alcohol. My girls did splendid work here, destroying the stores of liquor at my orders. If not for that the whole regiment would have been drunk. I rushed about appealing to the men to stop drinking.

"Are you going insane?" I pleaded. "You must take the third line yet, and then the Ninth Corps will come to relieve us and keep up the drive."

I realized that the opportunity was too precious. "We must take the third line and rip their defenses open," I thought, "so as to turn this blow into a general offensive."

But the men were succumbing one by one to the bitter scourge. And there the Ninth Corps will come to care of. Some of my girls were killed outright, many were wounded. We later almost all behaved like stoics. I can see, even now, the face of Kilmatskaya, one of my soldiers, lying in a pool of blood. I ran up to her and sought to aid her, but it was too late. She had twelve wounds from bullets and shrapnel. Smiling faintly her last smile, she said: "Milaya, nitchevo!" (My dear, it's nothing.)

The Germans organized a counter-attack at this moment. It was a critical instant, but we met the shock of the attack with our bayonets. As usual in such cases, the enemy turned and fled. We pursued them and swept them out of their third line, driving them into the woods ahead of us.

We had hardly occupied the enemy's third line when orders came by field telephone from the commander to keep up the chase so as not to allow the Germans to entrench themselves, with a promise that the supporting corps would start out immediately. We cautiously sent some patrols into the woods to find out the strength of the foe. I led one such scouting party and was able to detect that the German force was being slowly but steadily augmented. It was then decided that we immediately advance into the forest and hold positions there till reinforcements arrived, enabling us to resume the movement.

It was the half-light hour of morning. The Germans, being in the thick of the woods, had the advantage of observing every movement we made, while we could not see them at all. We were met by such a violent and effective fire that our soldiers lost heart and took to their heels by the hundreds, reducing our force to about 800, 250 of whom were those of my girls who had escaped death or injury.

Our situation rapidly grew perilous. The line running through the forest was long. Our numerical strength was wholly inadequate for it. Our flanks were in the air. Our ammunition was running low. Fortunately, we turned on the enemy several of our own abandoned machine guns. We stripped the dead of rifles and bullets. I can see, even now, the face of Kilmatskaya, one of my soldiers, lying in a pool of blood. I ran up to her and sought to aid her, but it was too late. She had twelve wounds from bullets and shrapnel. Smiling faintly her last smile, she said: "Milaya, nitchevo!" (My dear, it's nothing.)

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Had the Germans any idea at first of the size of our force we would not have remained there more than a few minutes. We dreaded, momentarily being outflanked and surrounded. Our line was stretched out so that each soldier held a considerable number of feet, our force altogether covering a distance of three versts. The Germans organized an attack on the left flank. Aid was dispatched from the right flank, which was left almost without machine guns, and the attack was repulsed. In this scrap Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov was wounded. There were many other officers and men lying about disabled. We could not spare the hands necessary to carry them to the first-aid dressing stations far away in our rear.

Three o'clock came and the expected reinforcements were not yet in sight. The Germans made an attack on the right flank. My adjutant, Lieutenant Philippov, was now commanding there. As our line was curved by orders the machine guns on the left flank to direct a slanting fire at the advancing enemy. At the same time our artillery began to deliberate whether to advance or not.

At my request the commander sent out about 100 stretcher-bearers to collect the dead and wounded scattered between our former line and the captured German third line. About fifty of my girls were dead or wounded. Meanwhile the sun had risen and time was fast passing. Our condition grew desperate. We sent an urgent appeal for help to headquarters. This shocking answer came from the other end of the wire: "The Ninth Corps has been holding a meeting. It arrived from the reserve billets and went forward till it came to the trenches we had held before the attack. There it stopped, wavered and began to deliberate whether to advance or not."

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## DISTILLERS WILL ATTACK DRY LAW

Industry Prepares an Assault on Amendment and "War Time" Act

LOOK TO REFERENDUM

Counsel Believes Popular Vote May Upset That of the Legislature

HAMBURG SAILORS BAR SAILING OF FOOD SHIPS

Refuse to Operate Two Vessels Demanded by Entente Under Agreement

By the Associated Press  
Berlin, March 21 (via Copenhagen).—The German steamships Burgenmeister von Melle and Burgermeister Schroeder, which were scheduled to sail on March 18 in accordance with the agreement reached at Brussels between German and Allied food commissions, have been prevented from leaving Hamburg owing to a resolution passed by seamen there refusing to operate ships demanded by the Entente nations.

Some newspapers protest against the resolution and say it represents the will of a "small unrepresentative section" and has met strong disfavor from other seamen's associations. The Hamburg section of the Transport Workers' Union has lodged a protest against the action of the seafaring conservation laws, could be law-

fully resumed as soon as the war is ended.

In their discussion of measures to nullify the federal amendment, the distillers named California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, Maine and Nebraska as states where referendum petitions have been circulated.

The distillers' attack on the wartime prohibition act alleges that the law, having been enacted after the signing of the armistice, went beyond the power of Congress to adopt measures for the national security and defense.

Members of the distillers' committee declared the decision to withhold litigation until the completion of peace negotiations was based on a desire to proceed only after the war emergency was formally declared a matter of history. It was said that the suit would be brought against the Collector of Internal Revenue and the Federal District Attorney "in some appropriate district."

Levy Mayer, of Chicago, counsel for the organization, was instructed to arrange for a suit to test the emergency prohibition law after the treaty of peace has been signed. Action to bring about a judicial review of the eighteenth amendment, it was stated, would await the outcome of referendum elections in thirteen states where petitions calling for a popular vote on the "bone dry" enactment have been filed or are in circulation.

Could Resume Distillation  
Mr. Mayer advised the committee that in states having referendum laws and in those whose legislatures have ratified the amendment, the ratification would have no effect unless a majority of the votes cast in the elections favored the amendment.

He also gave an opinion that, if the war-time prohibition act is unconstitutional, manufacture of distilled spirits, forbidden by the President under the war-time conservation laws, could be law-

At a mass-meeting of seamen held today the following resolution was passed: "Today's mass-meeting of seamen of all descriptions refused to participate in the delivery of German merchant ships demanded by the Entente, and declared it to be the duty to all seamen and laborers to refuse to carry out work on these ships."



## EL PRODUCTO



# What thing can you do best?

"Are you a misfit?" asks\* Walt Mason in the April American Magazine. Then he bursts out with this characteristic bit of Walt Masonry:

"The down-and-outer looms in view, the symbol of distress; there's doubtless something he could do, and score a big success. What if he failed at making cheese, or keeping lawns in trim? What if he failed at herding bees, and teaching hens to swim? I would not say that bone or wood was used to build his head; I would not say he is no good, until I see him dead. He may have failed at winding clocks, at spreading sealing wax; he may have failed at darning socks, at pulling carpet tacks. But somewhere there's the proper hole where this square peg would fit; so help him reach his little goal, that he may make a hit. He may be built for baking beans or brewing boneset tea, perchance for drilling horse marines, or teaching Cherokee. Perhaps, to make the fellow win, a kind word would suffice; I'd never say a man's all in until he's placed on ice."

In April  
\* "Are You a Misfit?" by Walt Mason. This is the first of a set of talks by the Emporia poet and humorist coming in the American Magazine.

# The American Magazine

The Crowell Publishing Company  
Woman's Home Companion  
The American Magazine  
Farm and Fireside

## FAVOR RATING OF LABOR

Stimulates Ambition Among Men, Industrial Conference Hears

New York, March 21.—Application to industry of a card-rating system for employees, similar to that used in the army, was urged as a step toward solution of labor problems by speakers at a round table conference here yesterday of the Society of Industrial Engineers.

W. S. McArthur of Armour & Co., Chicago, explained the personnel system now employed in the Armour industry, asserting that its rating had proved of great value in the placing of men, had proved a valuable check on promotions through favoritism and had stimulated ambition among the workers.

The ratings, he said, are made by immediate superiors of the men, but are carefully studied by the men higher up in the organization. Thus far the employees have not been permitted to know their ratings, but this privilege will be granted soon, he added.

Fred H. Rindge, secretary of the industrial department of the Young Men's Christian Association, said his experience had shown that employees were in favor of the rating system and asserted it tended to stimulate "average" employes from the bottom of the list up.

## REDS SEEK U. S. TRADE

Ready to Put \$200,000,000 in Banks to Cover Deals

New York, March 21.—As the first step toward obtaining recognition by the United States the Russian Soviet Government is prepared to deposit \$200,000,000 in gold with American and European banks for the purchase of supplies needed in reconstruction work, according to a formal statement issued last night by C. A. K. Martens, American representative of the Demidoff Iron and Steel Works in Moscow, through the Bureau of Representatives of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

Asserting he had received this week his appointment as official representative of the Soviet government in the United States, Mr. Martens said he had forwarded his credentials to the State Department and meanwhile had opened temporary headquarters in this city. With the exception that he said he had sent a report on conditions in Russia and an expression of his government's desire to re-establish normal relations between the two countries.

## NEW LOAN MUST BE BASED ON PATRIOTISM

Glass Says It Cannot Be Pushed on Commercial Interest Alone

Washington, March 21.—Appealing confidently to the patriotism of the American people to make a success of the coming Victory Loan, Carter Glass, Secretary of the Treasury, in two speeches in the Twin Cities yesterday, declared the loan could not be floated on a strictly commercial basis.

The people have ample resources, he declared, from the \$11,000,000,000 trade balance of the last three years, high war wages and the thrift engendered by the war and its savings campaigns.

"We are not going to approach the last Liberty Loan in a strictly commercial spirit," said Mr. Glass tonight, at the close of the two-day Better Business Convention of the Northwest. "A little thought will teach the wisest among the financiers of the country that it is impossible to float, purely for investment purposes, a loan of \$5,000,000,000 or \$6,000,000,000. We have got to appeal to the patriotism of the American people and it would not be done in vain."

Secretary Glass and William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, met several Liberty Loan selling organizations yesterday, showing the new details of the coming loan.

## U. S. Fleet Quits Brazil for Hoem

Rio Janeiro, March 21.—The American squadron, under Rear Admiral Caperton, which for some time has been paying visits to South American countries, sailed for the United States yesterday.

## GOES TO DEATH IN IRONS

Bloodthirsty Murderer Handcuffed on Way to Chair

Ossining, N. Y., March 21.—Giovanni Ferraro was executed last night for the murder of William Dunbar, of Farmersville, N. Y., over a year ago. He was the first man who ever went to the electric chair at Sing Sing prison handcuffed to a keeper. The manacles were still attached to his right wrist when he was pronounced dead.

Ferraro's attempt to kill his keepers in the death house yesterday led to elaborate precautions to prevent a second outbreak. He was handcuffed in his cell and extra guards were stationed at the cell door. Not until he was strapped in the chair was the handcuff removed from the keeper's wrist.

## Ponce de Leon

years ago came here in quest of the Fountain of Youth—for everlasting health and life. We are still searching, but in the realms of science. Elusive as health may be, we now know that food and water are its fundamentals; whereas the former nourishes, water cleanses and eliminates the waste, according to its purity and freeness from organic and mineral substances.

The clearest of all natural drinking waters being laden with these substances, science has given us PUROCK.

Purock Water is delivered to offices and homes in sterilized, sealed glass bottles. Six large bottles or a five-gallon demijohn, 50 cents.

DRINK Purock WATER

THE CHARLES E. HIRES CO., 210 S. 24th St., Philadelphia, BOTH PHONES

## WARNER TRAILERS

"The Trailer Without a Swing"

E. F. Houghton & Co. use Warner Trailers, saving time, money and labor. See exhibit at the Show.

JOHN W. ADAMS, 1427 Melon Street